



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.
1000 South Wind Dr., P.O. Box 5
Wamego, KS 66547
800-558-1580

www.bluestemelectric.com

Bluestem NEWS

BLUESTEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mark Diederich
President

Donald Classen
Vice President

Bruce Meyer
Secretary

Amanda Gnadt
Treasurer

Patricia Bloomdahl
Trustee

Gary Buss
Trustee

Steven Ohlde
Trustee

Stephen J. O'Shea
Trustee

Dan Pollock
Trustee

Matthew Rezac
Trustee

Richard Ridder
Trustee

MANAGEMENT STAFF

Michael M. Morton
General Manager

Trisha Bradley
Manager of Accounting and Finance

Jerod Chaffee
Manager of Line Operations

Benjamin C. Easterberg
Manager of AML and IT

Kevin Heptig
Manager of Member Services

CONTACT US

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, Inc.
P.O. Box 5
Wamego, KS 66547
800-558-1580

Bluestem Announces Retirement of General Manager

BLUESTEM GENERAL MANAGER

MICHAEL M. MORTON informed the board of trustees of his intention to retire effective January 2025.

Morton began his career at Bluestem Electric Cooperative in August 1984 and has served our members for more than 40 years. As general manager for the past six years, he demonstrated unwavering dedication, visionary leadership, and a deep commitment to serving our members and communities. Under Morton's guidance, Bluestem has achieved significant milestones, expanded its services, and maintained a strong financial position, ensuring safe and reliable energy to our members.

Throughout Morton's tenure, he has been instrumental in fostering a culture of innovation,

Continued on page 12D



General Manager Michael M. Morton announced his plan to retire in January 2025 during the annual meeting.

BLUESTEM SUMMER ELECTRIC RATE EFFECTIVE JUNE 1

Bluestem's Single-Phase Summer Electric Rate (typically residential) is effective June 1 and will apply to electrical usage from June 1 through Sept. 30.

Why do electricity costs increase in the summer? The main reason is that the demand for electricity goes up due to the need for air conditioning and crop irrigation.

Utilities must have enough generating capacity to meet their greatest demand for power throughout the year, which is usually in the summer months. Their cost of owning and operating the additional generating capacity necessary to meet the high summer peaks is reflected in the higher rates charged in the summer.

If you have any questions regarding the summer rate please contact Bluestem's office and also ask about other optional rates for which you may qualify.

26th Annual Meeting

MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2024

Highlights



Bluestem General Manager Mike Morton gives his report.



Bluestem staff serve members ice cream and cobbler.

Bluestem held its 26th annual meeting on March 25, 2024, at the Clay Center United Methodist Church Family Life Center located in Clay Center, Kansas. Approximately 107 registered members, guests, trustees, scholarship winners and employees attended the meeting.

The guest speaker was Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. CEO Lee Tafanelli.

Trustee elections were conducted by mail ballot last December. Re-elected to the board were **GARY BUSS, AMANDA GNADT, BRUCE MEYER** and **STEPHEN O'SHEA.**

Members and guests were treated to cobbler, ice cream, coffee and tea. Three names were drawn from the members present for separate cash prizes of \$150, \$100 and \$50.

The President and General Manager's reports were given. General Manager Michael M. Morton's retirement was announced during the meeting. He will retire in January 2025.

To close the meeting, Morton announced door prize winners. All members in attendance received a \$20 bill credit to their account.



More than 107 members and guests attended the annual meeting on March 25.



From left: Bluestem employees Audra Talsma, Trisha Bradley, Jennifer Soeken, Kristal Brewer and DeAnn Breault, greet and register members.



Herb Mugler gave the invocation for the annual meeting.



Board President Mark Diederich addresses General Manager Michael M. Morton's retirement in January 2025.

2024 Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to the 2024 Bluestem Electric Cooperative Scholarship winners **RYAN BRETHOUR, MITCHELL BOSSE, ADDISON KOCH, CARISSA KOLLE, KACI MESEKE, KARLI MESEKE, CAYLYN PFIZENMAIER, ELLA RHODES, SARA SMITH** and **TARA STALLBAUMER**.

Bluestem Electric Cooperative's scholarship program provided 10 scholarships totaling \$9,000 to high school seniors whose parents or guardians are members of the cooperative.

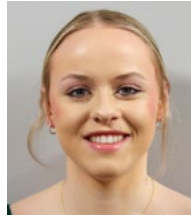
Winners are selected based on their online application, a test on electric cooperative knowledge, and a personal interview with a panel of six scholarship committee judges.

What a great group of young people we have representing Bluestem Electric Cooperative! We wish each of them success as they complete their senior year in high school and begin their college education.



Ryan Brethour

RYAN BRETHOUR is the son of Clay and Kristin Brethour of Lenexa. Ryan is homeschooled and plans to major in industrial engineering at Kansas State University in Manhattan.



Karli Meseke

KARLI MESEKE is the daughter of Kip and Brenda Meseke of Alma. Karli attends Wabaunsee High School and plans to attend Kansas State University in Manhattan.



Mitchell Bosse

MITCHELL BOSSE is the son of Lanny and Nancy Bosse of Wamego. Mitchell attends Wamego High School and plans to major in agricultural business at Kansas State University in Manhattan.



Caylyn Pfizenmaier

CAYLYN PFIZENMAIER is the daughter of Luke and Jaclyn Pfizenmaier of Clay Center. Caylyn attends Clay Center Community High School and plans to study mass communications.



Addison Koch

ADDISON KOCH is the daughter of Brian and Michelle Koch of Wamego. Addison attends Wamego High School and plans to major in nursing at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.



Ella Rhodes

ELLA RHODES is the daughter of Chan and Jennifer Rhodes of Wamego. Ella attends Rock Creek High School and plans to major in food science at Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana.



Carissa Kolle

CARISSA KOLLE is the daughter of Royce and Deanna Kolle of Linn. Carissa attends Linn High School and plans to major in secondary education with a focus in social sciences at Concordia University in Seward, Nebraska.



Sara Smith

SARA SMITH is the daughter of Jason and Annette Smith of Clay Center. Sara attends Clay Center Community High School and plans to study business at Kansas State University in Manhattan.



Kaci Meseke

KACI MESEKE is the daughter of Kip and Brenda Meseke of Alma. Kaci attends Wabaunsee High School and plans to study business at Kansas State University in Manhattan.



Tara Stallbaumer

TARA STALLBAUMER is the daughter of Scott and TamiSue Stallbaumer of St. Marys. Tara attends St. Marys High School and plans to study kinesiology or athletic training at Kansas State University in Manhattan.

Bluestem Announces Retirement of General Manager

Continued from page 12A ▶

collaboration and excellence within Bluestem, positioning the cooperative for continued success and growth in the years ahead. His leadership has been characterized by a relentless focus on member satisfaction, operational efficiency, and community engagement, leaving a lasting impact on our cooperative and the communities we serve.

“On behalf of the board of trustees and all Bluestem Electric employees, we extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Michael Morton for his outstanding leadership and dedicated service to our cooperative,” said Mark Diederich, board president. “Under his guidance, Bluestem Electric Cooperative has grown, and he leaves behind a legacy of integrity, innovation and commitment to our members.”

Morton will be deeply missed by all who have had the privilege of working with him. He has built a strong foundation for Bluestem Electric Cooperative to continue improving as we focus our mission of delivering safe and reliable electric energy.

A search for Morton’s successor is underway. Bluestem Electric is committed to ensuring a seamless transition to new leadership. The board of trustees will provide updates on the selection process as they become available.


Join us in congratulating Michael on his well-deserved retirement and wishing him all the best in his future endeavors.

Reminder – Be Aware of Utility Poles When Burning!



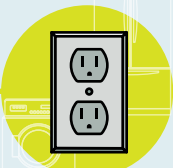
Before burning, check the property for electrical equipment and power poles to avoid damage and potential outages. Always assume any downed power line is energized. Keep everyone away and call 911 immediately. If any poles are damaged by a fire, the person starting the fire could be liable for the damage to Bluestem Electric’s equipment and the cost associated with repairing the damage.

THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY



\$5.36
average cost of a Big Mac®

\$4.57
average daily cost of power



Electricity is expressed on a daily basis using EIA's 2022 Average U.S. Monthly Residential Bill of \$137. Big Mac® is a registered trademark of McDonald's Corporation. McDonald's Corporation does not endorse or sponsor this material. SOURCE: WWW.ECONOMIST.COM AND EIA DATA FROM DECEMBER 2022

